Two Versions of a Persian Text on Yoga and Cosmology

Attributed to Shaykh Mu'in al-Din Chishti[1]

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One of the most intriguing aspects of the development of Sufism in South Asia has been the interaction of Sufis with the spiritual traditions of India, especially yoga. Much has been written on this theme, though frequently in a speculative manner.[2] It is therefore important to look for concrete examples of Sufi appropriation of yogic materials that can serve as the basis for an accurate historical reconstruction of the way in which these traditions were engaged. An excellent example for case study is a short Persian text on yoga and meditation that is attributed to the famous founder of the Indian Chishti Sufi order, Shaykh Mu'in al-Din Chishti (d. 1236). A number of different versions of this treatise are found in manuscripts held in different libraries, often with different titles, though there is a fair amount of overlap in the contents. Most commonly it is called the *Treatise on the Human Body* (*Risala-i Wujudiyya*); although Sufi metaphysicians and Islamicate philosophers generally interpret the key term in the title (*wujūd*) as the abstract concept of existence, it also has an archaic meaning of "body," and it is systematically treated in that way in these texts, as we shall see. It is also entitled the *Treatise on the Nature of Yoga* (*Risala-i Sarmaya-i Jog*), using the North Indian pronunciation in Persian script (thus we see *jūg* for the Sanskrit term yoga and *jūgi* for yogi); and there are other variant titles for what appears to be substantially the same text.[3]

While it is attractive to consider that the founder of the Indian Chishti order may have written this work on yoga and cosmology, this attribution is in all likelihood fictional. Legend is replete with accounts of Mu'in al-Din Chishti engaging in thaumaturgic contests with the jogi Ajaipal, but these stories are clearly part of the hagiographic tradition, in which Sufis inevitably were victorious over the jogis. As is well known, the successors of Mu'in al-Din, notably Shaykh Nasir al-Din Mahmud Chiragh-i Dihli (d. 1356), were quite certain that he never wrote anything at all.[4] The manuscripts of this text are all late; none is older than the late

seventeenth century. The two manuscripts I have used for this translation (one entitled *Treatise on the Human Body* and the other called *Treatise on the Nature of Yoga*) belong to the library collection of Pir Zia Inayat-Khan, and both appear to be quite recent copies written on modern paper, though they are undated. Since there are significant differences between the two copies, I have translated them side-by-side to facilitate comparison.

Why should such a collection of teachings with Indic psycho-physical practices be attributed to Mu'in al-Din Chishti? In one sense, this pseudoepigraphic attribution is an indication of the seriousness with which Indian Sufis approached the practices of yoga. In other words, these teachings were important enough that they should have been part of the teaching of the greatest Sufi master in the Chishti tradition. This attribution is paralleled by the phenomenon we see in the circulation of the most important Arabic work on hatha yoga, *The Pool of Nectar*, which in many manuscripts is attributed to the great Andalusian Sufi master Shaykh Muhyi al-Din Ibn 'Arabi (d. 1240).[5] From a strictly historical perspective, neither attribution can really be sustained; but it is striking to see that people felt that this should have been the case.

The text is divided into three short chapters (the numbered paragraphs are my own addition). Chapter 1 begins abruptly, omitting the customary praise of God and the Prophet Muhammad; and it consists of an account of the subtle physiology of hatha yoga, with emphasis on the three veins that parallel the spinal column.[6] It relates in detail an esoteric system of breath control related to a complicated cosmology, which assumes the concept of the human body as the microcosm related to the larger universe as macrocosm. Many details are obscure and demand more explanation than the text provides, which presumably would be available from oral commentary by a master. Most of this chapter is clearly Indic in origin.

Chapter 2 carries on with a number of similar themes, especially the microcosm-macrocosm analogy; but it is predominantly Islamicate in substance, with frequent quotations from the Qur'an (passages in Arabic are printed in bold). The cosmological analogies are drawn mainly from Arabic sources such as the *Epistles* of the Pure Brethren, which in turn draw on Pythagorean antecedents; many of these analogies are also found in the preface to *The Pool of Nectar*. There are a few significant touches from the classical Sufi tradition, such as the four types of soul in 2.1 (also listed in Diagram 1).

Chapter 3 has an interestingly composite structure, in which the metaphysical levels and archangels of Islamicate cosmology are linked to the breaths of yogic practice (3.1–6). In the *Treatise on the Nature of Yoga* these are accompanied by what are now unintelligible mantras; unfortunately, the inability of the Persian script to represent short vowels inevitably resulted in chaos whenever it was used for the transcription of Sanskritic phrases. Nevertheless, the text asserts that the realization of these levels is closely related to the supreme spiritual states associated with the Prophet Muhammad. Indeed, the text goes on to link these states with knowledge revealed during the Ascension of Muhammad to heaven, moreover it maintains that this knowledge was then conferred on Mu'in al-Din Chishti, either spontaneously by the Prophet Muhammad or through the agency of Mu'in al-Din's master, Shaykh 'Uthman Harwani (3:7–8). In other words, the principal teachings of this text are alleged to be the essential import of what the Prophet Muhammad received during his most sublime spiritual experience. At this point, Mu'in al-Din is warned not to transmit this esoteric teaching to just anybody, but the restrictions are generous enough to include sincere followers of the Chishti order in later generations (3.9). The text concludes with reflections on the two supreme stations known as Sultan Nasir and Sultan Mahmud, followed by additional comments on the subtle nerves of yogic teaching, the visualization of Muhammad, and the 99 names of God (3.10-11). Both manuscripts feature meditative diagrams of nested squares to illustrate the cosmological doctrines.

A detailed comparison of the two versions reveals considerable differences in portraying what is undoubtedly the same core teaching. The Sanskrit terms for yogic concepts such as the nerves are spelled with many variations, indicating the likely oral nature of this transmission (e.g., the central vein called *sukhumnā* uses the Hindi pronunciation of the Sanskrit *susumā*, while the parallel veins, known as *idā* and *pingalā* in Sanskrit, are here made into a rhyming pair, either *hingarā* and *pingalā*, or else *ingalā* and *pingalā*). Some of the Indic terms are no longer recognizable (to this reader, at least), and these are marked with question marks. The variations between the texts are not limited to spelling; in a number of places, there appear to be obvious mistakes in counting and in the recording of ordinary Persian words; I have attempted to account for these discrepancies in the notes and in parenthetic remarks. The general impression is of texts that are basically transcriptions of oral teachings given at different times and places by disciples who may have had a more or less sure grasp of the contents.

The overall significance of these writings is difficult to gauge. Today the presence of Indic spiritual teachings in Sufism can be a source of discomfort to Sufi orders who find their Islamic credentials questioned by fundamentalists. Likewise, the emphasis on purifying Hinduism from foreign accretions would make the Islamic references in these texts awkward for modern Vedantic schools of yoga. Yet these composite teachings clearly point to a concept of the world in which not only the fixed religious boundaries of today, but also the rigid separation of soul from matter were not even conceivable.[7] In that sense, these Sufi apocryphal texts on yoga, despite their inconsistencies and their sometimes formidable esotericism, may still have much to teach us.

Treatise on the Nature of Yoga
Chapter 1

Know that in the human being the first thing that appeared was the vein called *sukhumnā* [Sanskrit *susumā*]. Then came *ingalā* and *pingalā*. From these three, the nine *nāt'ak* (?) became manifest, and from the nine *nāt'ak*, the 360 veins and the 16 digits (*kalā*) came into existence. But the goal of those is the three veins, and their principle is one, which is called *sukhumnā*.

Know that the top of the *sukhumnā* vein is in the navel, and its root is in the middle of the *darzālat* (?). This vein draws breath from the navel, and that breath reaches the station of the navel by the path of the *darzālat*. From there it rises upward. The *ingalā* and *pingalā* are the veins of the left and right of the *sukhumnā*. Whenever the seeker draws breath from the navel, it is through the *sukhumnā*. Then it comes to the heart. From that place, it divides in three parts, and going between flesh, skins, and arteries, it enters into the brain. Then, going out between the two eyebrows, it picks up. When the seeker wishes to hold his breath and to become aware of its substance, he closes the nine doorways (i.e., the nine orifices of the body), and he eats mild and scanty food, so that during a 40-day retreat, a knot [*bandh*] appears, beneath the breast; in the second retreat, it is at the waist; and in the third retreat, the knot appears above. When these three knots are firmly established, the breath being in the midst of the knot, it happens three times.

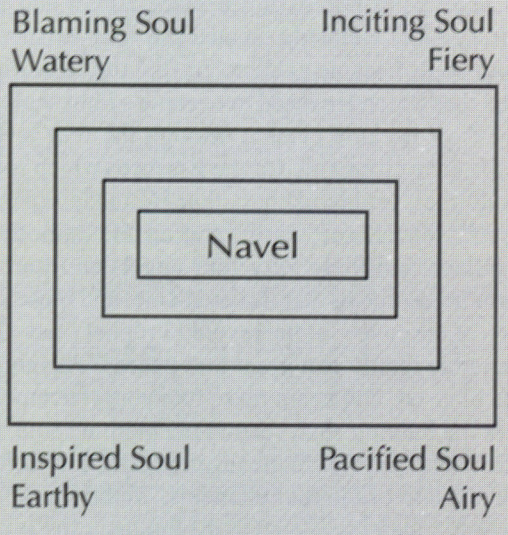


Diagram 1
from *Treatise on Existence*

Treatise on the Human Body
Chapter 1

He clarified that first is the vein *sukhumnā* [*susumā*]. Then there were the nine *ranātak* (?), the 316 60 [i.e., the 360]. Then there were the 360 and 16,000. But the goal of those is the three, and their principle is one, which is our *sukhumnā*.

By way of knowing the veins which are in the existence of human beings, the principle is from the navel; and the root of the *sukhumnā* is open in the middle, which is the *izālat* (?). And the *hingarā* and *pingalā* which are to the left and right of the *sukhumnā*. Then the seeker draws breath from the navel until it comes from the heart, having gone through the *sukhumnā*, to the heart. Then, above the heart there are three parts, and going between flesh, vein, and skin, it comes to the head. It circles three times, then, either going out between the eyebrows it goes out, comes to its place, and there turns around three times and stays. This is because of the following. When the seeker closes and locks the nine doorways, if he is able to eat little and lightly, during a 40-day retreat a knot appears and nine fingers of breath come out. Each finger's length is 250 years of life. Then, until the second 40-day retreat, if he practices asceticism until the second knot occurs, then until the third 40-day retreat, if he performs asceticism, the planetary guardians will become guides for them. Their principle has five aspects: earth, water, wind, fire, and perfect light. But four of these are dominant.

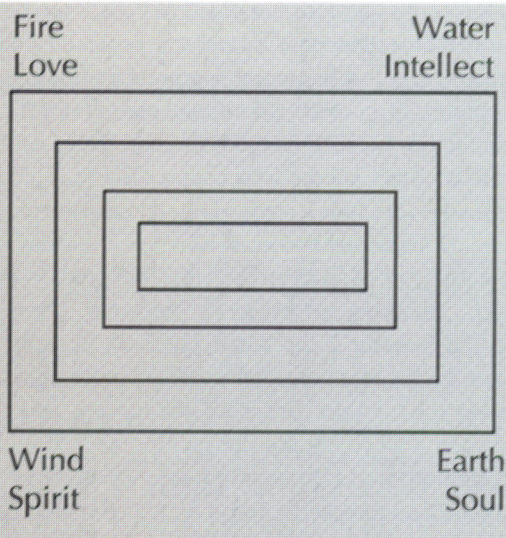


Diagram 2
from *Treatise on the Nature of Yoga*

Then he goes by the way of the breath from the mother's womb. There are six doorways there, within the folds of the navel, in the midst of the knot of the throne, which has three doorways on the right side and three doorways on the left side. Having opened these six doorways, he enters the window of the loins (or lumbar window). There he travels through 28 stations; in each station is a governor. He knows them, for their principle is from five things; and in each one of them a single attribute is dominated, and four attributes [are dominant?]. From those five people, 28 people appear. Five are of earth, and their color is yellow. Five are from water, and their color is white. Eight of them are from air, and their color is green. Five are from fire, and their color is red. Five are from light, and the color of that is black.

These 28 stations are the circle of substances, the 28 elements (or explanations), and the 28 stations of the left. Those 28 stations have three knots and three whirlpools; there, the breath becomes three lotuses (*bāraj*).

At that time, this sign appears: at the time of inhaling breath, after reaching this degree, in a week he takes in five [breaths] from the stomach, and the stomach becomes right. The proof of it is that he consumes [burns] whatever he eats. If he does not eat something, he has no need of food. A mighty power appears in him, and the stomach being right, it [the breath] goes between the flesh, skin, and blood. In every inhalation of breath, three times amidst them at that time, the flesh and blood decrease. The sign of that is that whatever is hidden is unveiled to him.

Every one of these is dominated by them. They have a master who flows and returns to that work, saying, "also they give information about themselves and about their reality." They are of five kinds. One is watery; seven people appear,[8] with these characteristics: five are of earth, whose color is yellow; five are of water, whose color is red; eight are from air, whose color is green; five are of fire, whose color is black; five are of light, whose color is white.

There are 28 circles which are the stations of the moon, and there are 28 stations, and there are 28 stations on the left. In these 28 stations, there are 3 knots, for here the breath goes around three times.

Then this sign appears: the seeker who inhales the breath, the gut has five *barā* (?). The gut becomes right; then after it becomes right, it is the gut. However much he eats, he consumes. And if he does not eat, he does not desire it. Much power appears in him. Then the gut becomes right and the breath is between the flesh, skin, blood, and vein for a week. Between the flesh and skin every time he inhales, three times the breath comes. Then blood and flesh decrease. This sign becomes evident, that whatever is a hidden secret becomes manifest and unveiling is clear.[9] By the command of God Most High, the work of the seeker is complete, **and God knows best what is right.**

Chapter 2

When God (glory be to Him) wished to make Himself manifest, and to see Himself, He created four things from the four elements, and four breaths. The first is the light that He separated from His pure essence. It became established in four degrees, in this likeness: the divine realm (*lāhūt*), the realm of potency (*jabarūt*), the angelic realm (*malakūt*), and the human realm (*nāsūt*), just like fire, air, water, and earth. In these four pillars are the four natures, the four proximate angels, and the very four friends of our revered Prophet (God bless him and his family and grant him peace)—may God be pleased with them. And from the very four souls—inciting (*ammāra*), blaming (*lawwāma*), inspired (*mulhama*), and pacified (*muṭma'inna*)—it is just as it is given in the division of the four elements: air is related to the spirit, water is related to the intellect, fire is related to love, and earth is related to the soul. Even so, the inciting soul is related to fire, the blaming soul is related to water, the inspired soul is related to air, and the pacified soul is related to earth.

Chapter 2

The Revered Master Mu'in al-Din Hasan Sanjari[10] (may God sanctify his conscience) was there. My dear! God Most High from nonexistence made Adam and from the five (i.e., four) elements created the four existences, and the four souls became evident. At first the Real Most High wished that which He made to become a light separate from Himself. It became evident through the four levels from the substance of longing for the Essence (which is splendid and sublime), in this likeness that He made separate from Himself. Water, fire, earth, and air He calls these very four pillars, and these very four angels and four natures, the proximate one to that Revered One, and these very four friends of the cave[11] of the revered Prophet (may God bless him and his family and grant him peace). This direction is in this likeness, and again these four souls became evident. First is the inciting soul, second the blaming soul, third the pacified soul, and fourth the inspired soul, just as it is given in the division of the four elements. Wind is related to the Holy Spirit, water is related to the intellect, fire is related to love, and earth is related to the soul. Likewise, the inciting soul is related to fire, the pacified soul is related to earth, and the inspired soul is related to water.

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Know that the Real Most High has created with his power everything in the world, and he has also created in the human being, just as in the word of the Most High: **"We shall show them our signs on the horizons"** (Qur'an 51:21) **"and in your souls; do you not then have insight?"** (Qur'an 41:53).[12] God Most High has created twelve zodiacal signs in heaven and has also created them in the human being.

First, the head is Aries, Taurus is the shoulders, Gemini the hands, Cancer the arm, Leo the breast, Virgo the belly, Libra the navel, Scorpio the genitals, Sagittarius the thigh, Capricorn the leg, Aquarius the shank, and Pisces the sole of the foot.

And the seven planets that wander through these twelve zodiacal signs correspond as follows: the sun is the heart, Jupiter the liver, the moon the lungs (*shush*), Mercury the kidney (*gurda*), Saturn the spleen (*supurz*), Mars the brain, and Venus (*zuhra*) the gall bladder (*zahra*).

And God (glory be to Him who is Most High) created 360 days, and the existence of the year came about from the total of those. The zodiacal signs of the heavens cover 360 degrees, and on the face of the earth there are 360 mountains and 360 great rivers. In the human being 360 individual bones stand in the place of mountains, and 360 veins in the place of the rivers. 360 pieces of flesh are in place of the 360 degrees of the zodiac, and 360 pieces of skin in place of the days.

The belly of a man is like the sea, and the hair is like trees; and in the forest and meadow there are biting worms and the like; and genital worms are in that position. The face is like a building and dwelling place. The back is like a desert and wasteland. In the world there are four seasons; and in the human such as these exist: childhood is spring, youth is summer, maturity is a fall, and old age is the rainy season.

Corresponding to thunder is the human voice, lightning to laughter, and rain to tears. Know that the ear drinks water from the bladder, and its water becomes clear from bitterness. The eye drinks water from the liver, and because of that, its water is difficult. The nose drinks water from the lungs, and therefore its water is dirty. The tongue drinks water from the heart, and its water is sweet. Intellect is in the brain, modesty (*ḥayā'*) in the eye, understanding is in the ear, knowledge in the breast, and thought is in the heart (*qalb*).

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Also, God Most High has created in the horizons with signs, which is established by reason of this verse of the Qur'an. The noble verse: **"We shall show them our signs on the horizons"** (Qur'an 51:21) **"and in your souls; do you not then have insight?"** (Qur'an 41:53). And another example, God Most High has created 12 zodiacal signs in heaven and has also created their likes in the human being.

First, the head is Aries, Taurus is the shoulders, Gemini the hands, Cancer the arm, Leo the breast and the heart, Virgo the belly, Libra the navel, Scorpio the pudenda, Sagittarius the thighs, Capricorn the leg, Aquarius the shank, and Pisces the sole of the foot.

Also, the seven stars that wander throughout these twelve zodiacal signs are also created in the human being, that is, the sun is the heart; Jupiter the liver; the moon, sun, and Mars are the gall bladder (*talkha*); Venus is the kidney; Saturn is the spleen *(Hindi tillī)*; and Mercury is the brain.

Also, God Most High created in the year degrees; and likewise, there are 360 in the human being, and they became evident in the number of bones. The 360 pieces of bone are like mountains. Also, these are like the 360 pieces of flesh. The 360 veins are like rivers, and the 360 rivers are created in different regions.

The belly is like the sea, and hairs are like trees . . . The face[13] is like buildings [and] dwellings. The back is like a desert. Also, the four seasons—spring is like childhood, summer like youth, fall like maturity, and winter like old age.

Also, the voice is just like thunder, and laughter[14] just like lightning, and weeping of the eye just like rain. For other stations are in existence. First is the tongue, then the nose, then the ear, then the eye. Also the ear drinks water from the bladder and that, to water is bitter. The nose drinks water from the lungs, and that water is dirty. The tongue drinks water from the heart, and that water is sweet. Also intellect [is in] the brain, the forehead (*jabīn*) is in the eye, understanding is in the ear, knowledge is in the breast, and thought in the bodily frame (*qālib*).

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The Revered Creator created seven heavens, as in his divine saying, **"We arranged one level upon another"** (Qur'an 84:19). First is the heaven of Saturn, second the heaven of Jupiter, third heaven of Mars, fourth the heaven of the sun, fifth the heaven of Venus, sixth the heaven of Mercury, seventh the heaven of the moon. And these are the five veils in the human being. Four proofs have become evident by this reality: fire, air, water, and earth. The essence of the heavens is the elements of the earth, the essence of the earth is plants, and the essence of plants is animals, and the essence of animals is the human, and the essence of the human is the **Real from every perspective.** Brother seeker! One should know and be familiar with these four breaths, and one should also know their quantity. What is the quantity of these four breaths, and what power do they have?

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Also, the Creator of the world created the seven levels of heaven. First is the heaven of Saturn and, second the heaven of Jupiter, third heaven of Mars, fourth the heaven of the sun, fifth the heaven of Venus, sixth the heaven of Mercury, and seventh the heaven of the moon. The station of Sultan Mahmud is upon it and air is dominant. In this way[15] it is said that the seeker should know these four breaths, for what quantity of power do these four breaths have? One should know the demonstration and one should gaze there. It has been said, so one should realize this point in the presence of the master.

Chapter 3, The Science of the Point

From this, by way of demonstrating the meaning of knowledge, a subtle point is reached, demonstrating this very subtle point. In each principle there is a word, and in each word there is a station.

Verse:

Divinity is fivefold, my son.
The angelic realm is the branch of that tree.
The realm of might is the leaf, behold it.
The realm of humanity in the world is just like fruit.

For it is said that one should demonstrate that every principle has a word, one that exists, each one is the principle of a word: the stations of humanity, the angelic realm, the realm of might, and divinity.[16]

Verse:

The trees are five, my son.
The angelic realm is the branch of that tree.
The realm of might is the leaf, behold it.
The realm of humanity of all the world is like fruit.

In the place of divinity is the tongue, the station of the Holy Spirit. Gabriel knows it. The place of Gabriel is **"the praised station"** (Qur'an 17:79). Gabriel is earthy, and the "praised station" is also earthy, its color is yellow, and its taste is thick. But it draws the breath 12 fingers out from the body. In the Indian language, they call this *mangalī mandala vartā kamal lahndar* (?).

Again, even in the place of divinity is another station of the realm of might, which is the tongue, and that is the station of the Holy Spirit. Gabriel knows it. The place of Gabriel is **"the praised station"** (Qur'an 17:79); the praised station is earthy, its color is yellow, and its taste has subtleties. But it tries to breathe out 12 fingers from this.

In the place of the angelic realm is the nose, and its station is the navel; Israfil knows it. Israfil is airy, and his color is green, and his taste is sour. But it draws the breath eight fingers out of the body, and in the Indian language they call this *barkamal tālī* (?).

Another station is in the three navels (?), and it is the nose. Israfil knows it. Israfil is also airy, and his color is green, and his taste is sour. [It draws] out eight fingers from the body.

In the place of the realm of might is the eye, and its station is the top of the head. Michael knows it, and Michael is watery, and the station of the top [of the head] is also watery. Its color is white, and its form is like the form of the new moon, and its taste is sweet. But it draws the breath 16 fingers out of the body, and in the Indian language they call this *shatadhal kamal barawwan hathil* (?).

The existence of the station of the angelic realm is the eye. Michael knows it, and Michael is watery and the station of the top [of the head] is also watery. Its color is white, and its form is like the new moon, and its taste is sweet. And this goes 16 fingers of breath outside.

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In the place of humanity is the ear, and 'Azra'il knows it. 'Azra'il is fiery, and the station of the ear is also fiery, and its color is red. Its taste is bitter. But it draws the breath four fingers out of the body, and in the Indian language they call this *madkamal amal* (?)

That is the station of Sultan Nasir; that is **"the praised station"** (Qur'an 17:79), the light of Majesty, the light of Beauty, the light of Muhammad, and the light of Ahmad. And these are the four bodies: the subtle body, the gross body, the body of eternality (*baqa'*), and the body of annihilation (*fana'*). These are the four spirits: the lowly spirit, the lofty spirit, the Holy Spirit, and the angelic (*malakī*) spirit.

Then from the demonstration of the quantity of these four breaths, when one draws them all in as a single breath, in a particular fashion from one place of the breath to another, as is written above, one practices until that air (*bād*) of **"the praised station"** and Sultan Nasir become dominant. As long as the seeker does not traverse these four breaths, **"annihilation in the master"** (*fanā' fī al-shaykh*) does not take place, and there is no **"eternality with God"** (*baqā' billāh*).

One should know these four breaths and perform the action. These four airs in the human being have an emperor, but they are in the following of a single person, and this is the light of Muhammad, which rides all the four elements. The light of Muhammad is the light of the One (*aḥad*). The seeker should [know] that just as the One was, even so it is again, and that the being of the light of Muhammad is in acquisition from this. Wayfarers on this path are given no access to the Ascension without this acquisition. For it is not possible, because the planetary governors become dominant, not allowing anyone to enter as long as it is not the request of the Real (glory be to Him who is exalted).

Know that this is the acquisition of the Revered Prophet (May God bless his family and grant him peace), which Gabriel had taught. And that time when my master and savior, Lord 'Uthman Harwani (May God sanctify his conscience) had bestowed grace and kindness upon this beggar (i.e., Mu'in al-Din Chishti), he took my spirit to the presence of that Revered One (May God bless him and his family and grant him peace). He said, "Lord! This is a child who is worthy of succession." The Revered messenger of God (May God bless him and his family and grant him peace) gave me this much knowledge and this divine acquisition, saying, "Mu'in al-Din! God Most High taught this acquisition to Gabriel (peace be upon him), and Gabriel taught it to me. The time when God Most High

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Another station, divinity, is the ear. 'Azra'il knows it. 'Azra'il is fiery, and the station of the ear is all fire; its color is red, and its form is (?). Its scent and flavor are bitter. From this it goes out four fingers of breath.

That is the station of Sultan Mahmuda and Sultan Nasira, the lights of Majesty, the light of beauty, the light of the One, the light of Muhammad, and the light of Mahmud. These are the four bodies: the subtle body, the gross body, the body of annihilation, and the body of eternality. And these are the four spirits: first the lowly spirit, second the lofty spirit, third the Holy Spirit, fourth the heavenly spirit. **"Truly God encompasses everything"** (Qur'an 4:108).[17]

One learns the practice of these four breaths by heart from the master. When one draws in[18] these four breaths all at once in a particular fashion, one holds the breath from one place to another, and thus it is written in Chapter 1, and even so it is explained, until with that breath with "the praised station," Sultan Mahmud,[19] and Sultan Nasir become dominant. In this way, the seeker should traverse all four paths at once, all four; that station then becomes available until **"annihilation in the master and eternality with God"** occur.

Then one should know these four breaths and contemplate them. These four that exist from the human being each have an emperor, but they are a single person through following speech; that is, the points on which they rest are the light of Muhammad. It has come to be just as it was, and even so it is again, and this is the acquisition of the light of Muhammad, which the advanced masters, who were both scholar and practitioner, will become.

Then he gave them guidance; that is, it is the acquisition of the Ascension, but it is possible that one should know that in this matter the Prophet provided information to be about the foregoing and bestowed this acquisition. He said, "Mu'in al-Din!" God Most High had taught this acquisition to Gabriel. At the time when the Real Most High was manifesting his Messenger, that which God had done was also united with this acquisition. That day when the practice was completed became the very occasion of the Ascension. So the origins were manifest to our Messenger, and he said, "Mu'in al-Din! I also bestowed this acquisition upon you." The time when the acquisition was obtained was the very time when the Ascension became my destiny, because that is to write, **"humanity is My secret."**

wished to manifest his prophecy, he separated me from that place and I became united with this acquisition. The day when this practice was completed was the very time when the Ascension became my destiny. Then prophecy became manifest. Mu'in al-Din! I bestow this very acquisition upon you!"

I came to this side (i.e., the world) and became occupied with this acquisition. At the time when this practice was completed I reached the height; at that moment this beggar experienced the Ascension, but permission was not given to write about the secret. Again I presented my case to the Revered One with a thousand entreaties and laments, and permission was granted, on the condition that he stated: "Do not speak[20] of this to every seeker and disciple, except to someone who is a sincere seeker and has more or less learned the knowledge, so that this secret should not go from house to house." Brother! This acquisition is something to be realized. First, one goes before the master; when the master knows[21] that the realizations have clearly taken place for the seeker, then he authorizes this acquisition.

He says that spirits have two forms: one lofty and the other lowly. He adds two forms to all four forms; and again, these two forms both have a station: one is Sultan Mahmud and the other is Sultan Nasir. He is a single traveler in two forms, and the other is the stationary one. The seeker should know and become familiar with the form of the traveler and know his color, as is said above, so the seeker does not make a mistake. Most of this form of the traveler reaches the form of the stationary one, and that form of the stationary one attains witnessing of the Real, and here he attains the reality of the 99 Names.

Since there was no permission [to reveal] this secret, and these words were hidden, again I requested with a thousand entreaties and laments. I obtained permission from the Revered One, on this condition: "Do not ever tell this secret to every seeker, every friend, every poor man, and every master, except if it is a sincere seeker and a sincere friend, who has more or less learned the knowledge of unity. Holding these words, tell him, but otherwise these words should not go from house to house." Brother! This is the acquisition of the saints and the ascetics. If they experience realization by this path, then they are the perfect master, and so these realizations become evident for this seeker.

Then he tells of this acquisition, that spirits have two forms: one lofty and the other lowly. Know that he adds these four forms in the midst of two forms. One should know that these two forms have two stations: one is Sultan Nasir and the other is Sultan Mahmud. The other two forms that exist—one is the traveler and the other is stationary. Thus the seeker should know and be familiar with the form of the traveler. And that which he knows, just as is said above, is so that the seeker may not experience opposition. If this form of the traveler attains the form of a stationary one, he also attains the witnessing of the Real; from here, which was reality, he becomes familiar with the name of God Most High.

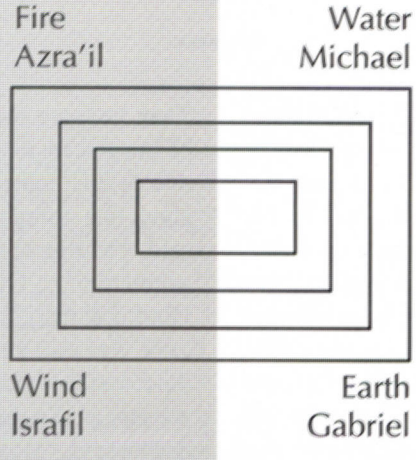


Diagram 3 from *Treatise on the Nature of Yoga*

concluded on page 124

Treatise on the Nature of Yoga

Carl Ernst: continued from page 76

The master tells the seeker to direct his gaze down to the nose, in the *barra* (?) of the nose. This is from the point of view that these two eyes which they call sun and moon, which are related to both chief veins, which in the Indian language are called *ingalā* and *pingalā*, both of which are related to the *sukhumnā* vein, which is the vein of life—they hold these two, the sun and moon, in the middle of the *sukhumnā* vein. They efface their own image, in the form that we displayed; in this form, visualization is added, in the form of the master, which shows the outer view. For which master is commanding to gaze above the nose? In the midst of the nose is the station of the angelic realm, and the form of the place is displayed in a thousand ways, external and internal. But every form that he displays expresses the fact that the form of the master is visualized in the glance. He does not pass by that visualization until the visualization of the form of the master is added in the form of Muhammad and he attains the visualization of Muhammad. The visualization of Muhammad attains the visualization of God. Then the reality of the 99 names becomes manifest, and those 99 names are effaced in a single name. The one that exists, that is "A" (*alif*), and it became the inhalation of "He" (*huwa*), and the station of M (*mīm*), and from M is N (*nūn*). Farewell.

Treatise on the Human Body

So that both eyes, which they call sun and moon, both of which are connected to the chief veins, which in the Indian language they call *mangalā* and *pingalā*—both veins are connected to the soul, and the vein of life in the Indian language is called *sukhumnā*. The two are called sun and moon, and in the midst of the *sukhumnā* rests a color that has no form. And the form that we displayed, this form is understood by the form[22] in the form of the master, which is displayed in the outer view. Which is the time when the master says [gaze] "at the nose?" because the nose is the station of the angelic realm and it displays the form of the Angels in a thousand ways, external and internal. But that form which he displays[23] expresses the fact that it is the form of the master himself. This form is by the form of the master, and the form of the master is by the form of Muhammad. This form that is attained after this reaches the form by the form of the visualization of Muhammad, and the visualization of Muhammad is by the forms of Unity. By the reality of the 99 names,[24] the Creator Most High became manifest. And so it was that the one name Mahmud became effaced, and the one name that is, that was "A" (*alif*), and it became the inhalation of "He" (*huwa*); and "He" made M (*mīm*) by his own station, and from M **"N (*nūn*) and the pen"** (Qur'an 68:1) is illuminated. **The goal is the goal,** and this is it. It is finished and complete.

Notes

[1] Although I generally prefer to avoid using diacritics, in order to avoid confusion with technical terms in this article, I use the transliteration system of Persian from the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. For Indic retroflex consonants I use an apostrophe. Proper names and book titles are left without diacritical marks.

[2] For an overview of the issues surrounding the relationship of Sufism and yoga, see my articles "Situating Sufism and Yoga," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Series 3, 15:1 (2005), pp. 15-43; and "The Islamization of Yoga in the *Amrtakunda* Translations," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Series 3, 13:2 (2003), pp. 199-226.

[3] MSS include 6314 Ganj Bakhsh, Islamabad, entitled simply "Treatise of Mu'in al-Din Chishti"; cited by Ghulam-'Ali Arya, *Tariqa-i Chishtiyya dar Hind wa Pakistan* (Tehran: Kitabfurushi-i Zavvar, 1365/1987), p. 100. Other examples include the "Treatise on Horizons and Souls" (*Risala-i afaq wa anfus*), 1754 India Office Library, London, fols. 272-4; and the "Treatise on Wayfaring, on the Status of the Human Veins" (*Risala dar suluk dar sha'n-i rag-ha-yi adami*), MS 152 Pir Muhammadshah Dargah, Ahmedabad, fols. 1-15. The latter two citations I owe to Dr. Scott Kugle. There are at least nine other MSS in libraries in Pakistan, of which the two oldest are dated 1084/1673; for details, see Ahmad Munzavi, *Fihrist-i mushtarak-i nuskha-ha-yi khatti-i farsi-i Pakistan* (Islamabad: Markaz-i Tahqiqat-i Farsi-i Iran u Pakistan, 1363/1405/1985), 3:2101-3, no. 3820.

[4] See Carl W. Ernst and Bruce B. Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love: Chishti Sufism in South Asia and Beyond* (New York: Palgrave Press, 2002).

[5] See "Islamization of Yoga."

[6] For detailed accounts of these yogic teachings, see Mircea Eliade, *Yoga, Immortality and Freedom*, trans. Willard R. Trask, Bollingen Series LVI (2nd ed., 1969); David Gordon White, *The Alchemical Body: Siddha Traditions in Medieval India* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996); George Weston Briggs, *Gorakhnath and the Kanphata Yogis* (Calcutta, 1938; reprint ed., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980).

[7] For an illuminating commentary on the role of yogic anatomy in Sufism, see Scott Kugle, *Sufis and Saints' Bodies: Mysticism, Corporality, and Sacred Power in Islam*, Islamic Civilization and Muslim Networks Series (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, forthcoming), chapter 7.

[8] This version here appears to be confused and should probably read, with the other version, "and from those five people, 28 people appear."

[9] Reading *sirr* (secret) instead of *sīr* (full; milk); the word *tīr* (arrow) after *kashf* (unveiling) is inexplicable.

[10] This common spelling of one of the names of Mu'in al-Din Chishti is based on an old misreading of Sijzi as Sanjari.

[11] "Friend of the cave" (*yār-i ghār*), here applied to all of the first four caliphs (called "the four friends" in the parallel text), is an epithet normally reserved for Abu Bakr, who sheltered with the Prophet Muhammad in a cave as they departed Mecca for Medina.

[12] The juxtaposition of these two verses from the Qur'an is evidently due to the similarity of the phrase at the beginning of the second citation to the phrase that continues the first citation: "We shall show them our signs on the horizons and in their souls" (Qur'an 51:21).

[13] The manuscript reads *dar vay*, which should be emended to *rū y*, as the other version has it. **(Notes concluded on next page)**

(Ernst notes continued)

[14] The text reads either *khastan* (injure) or *jastan* (jump), apparently a mistake for the well-established equivalency of laughter (Persian *khandan*) with lightning (*Amrtakunda* 1.2).

[15] Several garbled and unrecognizable words follow in the place corresponding to an Arabic phrase in the other version.

[16] The word "eight" (*hasht*) appears here without any apparent significance, and it does not fit metrically into the following verse.

[17] The quotation from the Qur'an is inexact but parallels both 4:108 and 41:54.

[18] Reading *bi-kashad* (draws in) as in the other version, instead of *yikshahr* (a single town).

[19] Several words appear with no apparent meaning (*yād wa wa yād*), possibly reflecting the shape of the word "air," *bād*.

[20] The text reads "speak," which is clearly an error for "do not speak."

[21] Reading *bi-dā nad ki* for *bi-dā n ki* ("know that").

[22] The text has the ungrammatical feminine plural *surāt* ("forms").

[23] The text adds here an unintelligible word, *makish*.

[24] The text, by shifting a dot, mistakenly gives "was" (*būd*) instead of "ninety" (*nuvud*).